1) THE CUSTOM OF THE EROTIC DREAM (Tilorela).

881 When a young man has noticed for the first time an emissio
195 seminis, he is said to have become an adult (a kulile, a thombile)
751 to have "drunk the nkanye." The nkanye is the tree from which the bukanye is made. It is prepared for the great feast of the new year. *To drink the nkanye* is an euphemism to designate the entrance into a new phase of life, into the age of puberty. According to Mboza, the lad must go early in the morning to wash his body, and that is all. But Tobane says that, in the Mpfumo clan, the family doctor is called; in a broken pot, he roasts pieces of skin of all the beasts of the veldt, together with some half digested grass taken from the stomach of a goat (psanyi). The boy must eat a little of this medicine and rub all his joints with it. This will strengthen him so that, when he has relations with girls, he will not be overcome (gemiwa) by them. This rite, which is very similar to the rite of the broken pot performed for infants, is connected with the "gangisa," the sexual habits of young people which begin at the time of puberty, as we shall see later on.

881 At this time also, the boy begins to wear the very primitive
291 clothing called *shifado* (sha ku siba, the thing with which one
177 closes, see Annotatio 1). In former times they wore only the *mbayi*,
789 a small cylindrical or conical object of woven palm leaves, which
832 was the national dress of the Thongas; the *shifado* seems to be of Zulu origin. It is very much valued as preventing contact with the earth, as a protection against ants and an aid to continence; the lads who do not wear it are blamed and accused of being *ba-nato*. The word *nato* means a magical medicine by means of which men of low morals throw men or women into a deep sleep during the night, enter the huts of other people and commit adultery with their wives.

2) THE PIERCING OF THE EARS (Ku tjunya, (Ro.), boshela. (Dj.).

881 This also takes place at this period. There are two ways of
304 performing it, either by an actual piercing of the lower lobe
177 with a thorn, or by cutting it with a knife. The first method

1[See p. 516 in these categories or in 116 - Analyst]

3) The Gangisa.

832 836 882 When a boy has gone through the puberty rites, he is grown up and is allowed to practise the *gangisa*. This word comes from *ganga*, which means " to choose a lover." Each girl is asked by the boys to choose one of them ; they *make them choose* (gangisa, factitive derivative). I once observed some boys—they were still very young—flirting round three or four girls just like bees round ripe plums, running after them, and saying repeatedly : " Choose me! Choose me! " There is a special blue cotton print with a large white pattern which is called " gangisa ntombi " viz. to make a girl choose, as it is offered by the lover to the damsel of 836 his choice in order to obtain her favour. When a girl has made 848 her choice, her boy plays with her like husband and wife, first 684 building little huts, etc. but later on in a less platonic fashion. In fact nothing is prohibited in the relations between young people [837] of the two sexes. A married woman is sacred amongst the Thongas, but an unmarried girl is not. However, she must not become pregnant. (1) If this happens, the parents will say to the lover : "You have spoiled our daughter, you must buy her in marriage." If he refuses, the child will belong to the family of the girl. Excesses in gangisa are condemned. A boy who commits them is said to be an adulterer (a ni bupse) ; of a girl they say : " She will lose her head (a ta ba singe). "

882 836 As the unmarried boys and girls live in special huts, the *lao* of the boys and the *nhanga* of the girls, at the entrance of the village, it is easy for them to meet during the night. During the day, they generally behave themselves becomingly. But when the lads pay visits to their girls, who sing to the accompaniment

(1) When a girl becomes pregnant, having had relations with her lover inside her parents' village, it is very serious; it is taboo. The boy will have to find a goat, to kill it during the night in the girl's kraal, and to rise very early; then both the boy and the girl, quite naked, must go round the village and sprinkle the fence from inside with a special decoction. None must come out of the huts to look at them. This will prevent the inhabitants from contracting the disease called mukuhlwane (cough, lung complaint) which would otherwise attack them. Moreover the guilty boy will have to pay a fine of £ 5 in cattle to the parents of the girl.

836 of rattles, they sometimes stay with them till late in the night.
832 They bring them small presents, articles of clothing or other things, and thus obtain permission to have intercourse with them. Mboza described to me a very immoral meeting which sometimes takes place in these huts in connection with the *milebe* habit, and which is connected with this gangisa. It is impossible to give the details here. (Annotatio 5.)[1]

836 The gangisa custom is, from our point of view, very immoral.
831 Amongst Natives it is not censured at all, and it would be more accurate to speak of *amorality* then of *immorality*, amongst them, on this particular point. A boy who has no such flirt, no *shigango*, is laughed at as a coward; a girl who refuses to accept such advances is accused of being malformed. However Mboza told me he had never had a shigango himself and the abuse in this respect is not approved of by old people. In Manyisa, I heard of a young chief who was leading all the lads to gangisa and forcing the girls to accept them. The extent of this evil depends very much [644] on the character of the boys and girls. I may add that, as regards the young people of the capital, they are not allowed to practise the gangisa because they belong to the royal family and are closely watched.

When they become Christians, Natives readily accept our standard of morality, but cases of fornication are very frequent amongst converts, so much so that this has been rightly called the African sin! I mention this fact, but I must say on the other hand that thousands of pupils in our Native Institutions lead a very moral and continent life and do not seem to find any great difficulty in doing so.

839 If the gangisa spoils the whole life of the young heathen, it is
177 only just to add that they do not practise two vices which are prevalent amongst certain civilised nations, onanism and sodomy. These immoral customs were entirely unknown in the Thonga tribe before the coming of civilisation. Unhappily it is no longer so now, as we shall see in Appendix III on unnatural vice in Johannesburg.

836 Comparing the habits of the Pedis and the Thongas we observe
837 this strange fact: amongst the Thongas the unmarried girl is

1 [See p. 517 in these categories or in 116 -- Analyse]

1. *Love charms.*

832 584 If a boy has not been successful in his " gangisa ", if he is despised by the girls and has no chance of being accepted, a special rite is performed to help him to find a wife. The Ba-Ronga do not know the love-philter as such, but they have a substitute for it ; the old village cock is put on the lad's head and kept there for a long time ; the cock scratches him with his claws ; he is then allowed to go. The boy will now succeed ; he will be like the cock, who never lacks spouses! (Mboza).

Other charms are used for girls, especially a certain medicine which produces an abundant lather when boiled in water. The physician washes the girl's body with it, after which she will " appear " (a ta boneka) to the eyes of would-be suitors (Tobane).

755 832 584 Should however a girl not find a husband in the lawful way, she has another means at her disposal—marriage by abduction, and thus no one, or hardly any one, remains unmarried amongst the Thongas. Mankhelu, who was a great doctor, treated this " complaint of singleness " with more seriousness! He used his strongest medicines to heal the boy or the girl who was unable to find a partner in life. This is the treatment followed by him. He takes a she-goat, in the case of a boy, a he-goat in that of girl, and anoints it with fat mixed with his precious medicinal powder ; he rubs the animal (hondla) from the mouth to the tail, stretches out all its limbs and kills it. No prayer is offered, but the *psanyi* (the half digested grass which is found in the stomach) is carefully collected. The boy is then called, enters his own hut, spreads a mat on the ground, sits on it quite naked and rubs his whole body with this substance. " A tihorola, a tihurulula " says Mankhelu. He rubs away from himself all his filth. When he has finished, he coughs to call the doctor, who comes and gathers into a pot all the " timhorola," the particles which have fallen on the mat ; he takes a portion of this and squeezes it into a small bag of lizard-skin so as to make a *shitjungulu* or amulet. The sister must come after sunset without any clothing into the boy's

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

hut and tie the bag round his neck. What remains of the *timhoroia* will be used to smear the hut. Then all the girls will love him; or in the case of a girl, she will soon be asked in marriage.

This ceremony is a characteristic *hondlola*, the same which is performed on the weaning day (see page 59) and after any serious disease; it is a rite of removal of impurity. (Notice the termination ola, ula, ulula in these verbs; it means generally to undo, to take away).

If the love charms do not obtain the desired result, the angry boy will perhaps try to avenge himself. He will take a fowl, or perhaps only an egg, treat it with special drugs and give it to the girl in order to bewitch her. This kind of witchcraft is called *ku dambikela*. (See the Chapter on Witchcraft, Part VI). The girl will give birth not to a child, but to an animal, a pigeon, or a snake. Or her genitalia will be changed and take the appearance of the male organ. This is one of the causes why eggs and fowls are taboo for girls.

Let us now hear from Tobane the description of the marriage rites amongst the Mpfumo clan. We shall afterwards see how the customs differ in other Ronga and Thonga clans.

II. *Marriage ceremonies of the Mpfumo clan.*

1) The betrothal (Buta).

When a young man has made up his mind to get married, and when he is in possession of the necessary lobola (1) cattle, he starts, one fine day, with two or three of his friends to look for a wife in the villages. He puts on his most brilliant ornaments and his most precious skins. Here they are, arriving in the village

1) *Ku lobola* means to buy in marriage. *Ku lobola* (a factitive derivative of the verb) is said of a father who claims a sum of money from his daughter's suitor. *Lobolo* or *ndjobolo* or *lubwa* (wealth) is the sum paid, the oxen, the hoes, or the pounds sterling. We shall use these words, which are employed in Thonga as well as in Zulu and ought to be adopted as technical ethnographic terms. I use the verb for the act of paying and the noun for the sum itself.

3) Pointing of the teeth (Ku hleta).

304 881 This custom is also dying out. It used to be incumbent on all the girls. Now many do not observe it. They have seen that teeth deformed in this way decay more quickly. The operation is performed on the incisors, and girls must keep their mouths closed for two or three days, not showing their teeth to anybody.

Near Rikatla, the hleta custom was still in force in the heathen villages in 1910. It gives the girls a kind of canine aspect.

4) The milebe custom.

304 881 832 191 This is very wide-spread all over South Africa. Though it has disappeared now amongst most of the Ronga clans, it is still practised in the Manyisa country, over the whole of Bilen and in the Northern clans, amongst the Zulus, the Pedi-Suthos, etc. It is probably the origin of the famous "Hottentot apron," which some ethnographers thought to be a congenital malformation, and which is merely the result of this custom (Annotatio 5)[1]. It is a very ugly habit, very immoral from our point of view, fixing the imagination of the girl on sexual relations, but amongst the Thongas it is upheld as being quite the right thing.

B. MARRIAGE AND CONJUGAL LIFE

1) Conditions of Marriage

581 832 In the primitive Bantu tribe every girl gets married, some, however, sooner than others. Suitors prefer pretty girls to ugly ones! But what is their standard of beauty? The ideal is tall stature, strong limbs and well developed breasts. A proverb

1 [See p. 517 in these categories or in the Analyse]

says: "Nsati wa mabele u nga nabele loko u nge na bukosi." — "Do not covet a woman with large breasts if you have no money..." This does not mean that she will cost more, but her father, knowing that she will not want for suitors, will not consent to let her go unless the full lobolo is paid at once. On the other hand a girl with an elongated face is admired more than one who is too broad-faced. Of the first they say: "She is pretty, she resembles an antelope" (a kota mhala); of the second: "She is chubby-cheeked, she is like a sow." A light complexion is preferred to a very dark one, because the white or yellow races are regarded as superior, and a Native laying claim to any European or Asiatic blood is proud of it. Parents, who also have their say in the question of marriage, insist on two other points; the working capacity of the girl, and the absence of any witchcraft blot in the family. Should her mother have been convicted of being a witch, the girl will be feared. However, every girl finds a husband in the land where polygamy flourishes. If he be slow in coming, she will apply to her doctor, who will prepare the *love charms*, which will make her "appear," so that she will be noticed by the boys (See page 100). If even that does not succeed, she has other means at her disposal and may go herself to make proposals to a man (wopsana). He is seduced by her, and constitutes himself a thief who has *tlhuba*, viz. "taken in marriage by abduction" (See page 119). The parents will claim the lobolo and he must pay it. Marriage and childbearing remain the only carreer to which a Thonga woman can look forward. Hence a number of special feminine taboos which are very curious.

2) Special feminine taboos.

Some of them concern girls *before childbearing* and cease after parturition. In the Tembe and Maputju clans, girls must not eat pork, because pigs root nervously with their noses; the future child would also move its head from one side to the other, when on the verge of birth, and this would make delivery difficult. Other

576 is not as if they were trying to raise their hats, as they do not wear
629 any. The explanation of the gesture is this, according to a Transvaal Native : the Boers taught black people to point to heaven, when saluting a white man, with this meaning : I compare you with the One who is above!

576 In the Northern clans, salutations are generally accompanied
201 by a clapping of hands (omba mandla). Men beat their hands against each other, placing them parallel to each other ; women do the same, placing them crosswise or at right angles. Amongst the Ba-Pedi this salutation with the hands is performed in a somewhat different manner ; when a Pedi enters the hubo, and wishes to greet a gathering of men, he claps his hands before his breast ; but when he salutes only one person, he bows down and claps his hands at the height of his knees, either on the right side or on the left. Amongst the Ba-Ronga, clapping the hands is a sign of thankfulness ; they say as they do so : *I khani mambo*, which probably means : "I dance before you, Sir." ("Mambo" means chief in the Ndjao language.) In Djonga the proper word for thanking is *nkomo*. The etymology of this word seems to be : "I homu," "it is an ox." If anyone gives me a hen, he presents it to me saying : "Take my chick." When he brings a goat he says : "This is my hen." In both cases I answer : "Nkomo," "it is an ox!" The Thonga etiquette requires that the giver depreciate his gift and that the receiver magnify it! Another less polite way of thanking is this : *Yengetan*!, — "do it again," or *ni mundjuku*, — "and also to-morrow!"

576 Thongas used not to *shake hands* in former times. Now-a-days
177 the civilised Natives have adopted the European fashion, but this kind of familiarity is not approved of by the old folks, especially by the chiefs. Natives, when they shake hands, often do it in two movements : first they catch the four fingers and then slide on to the thumb. I do not know where they have
832 learnt to do this! *Kissing* was formerly entirely unknown. A good mother would occasionally wipe her baby's nose, but this can hardly be called a kiss. When they saw the custom adopted by the Europeans, they said laughingly : "Look at these people! They suck each other! They eat each other's saliva and dirt!"

832 576 593 152 572 Even a husband never kissed his wife. On coming back from a journey, a man would hardly greet his wife; she would see him passing through the village, prepare food for him, and when it was cooked, she would come and salute him by presenting it to him. But if he has a good friend in the village, and if this friend sees him coming back after a long absence, their meeting will be much more touching. The friend will go to the main entrance of the village, exclaim: "Ha-Ha," take his parcel from his hands, put his arms round his shoulders (a ku mu buso hi mandla), remove the perspiration from his face, and pat him gently, saying: "Your ancestor-gods have their eyes open! They have worked well! They have brought you back."

574 609 622 *Hospitality*. When strangers enter a village, men sit on the *bandla*, and women go further on and sit on the *hubo*; they remain quietly there till the people of the village come and salute them (losa). Should the inhabitants delay too long, the visitors move on, saying: "These people are not good." But this is very rare. Generally the master of the village comes to them, inquiring who they are, whence they come, where they are going, and asks them: "Do you wish to spend the night here?" If they say: "Yes," the headman will empty one of his huts by putting two of his wives together, and will himself sleep with the visitors. Should there still be food, he will give them some. If not, he says: 574 609 622 203 195 "*Ndlala*!" "Starvation!" After a little while, a mat is unrolled and the official ceremony of "djungulisana" takes place. This is a very amusing custom. The headman sits together with his hosts and enquires about the news of their home. One of the visitors begins in a monotonous tone and pours forth volubly a flow of words with a peculiar cadence and almost without taking breath. His interlocutor interrupts him after each sentence, with "Ahina, hina," that is to say "Indeed, indeed!" till the whole skein is unwound; the two men finish with a longer "*Hina*," the inhabitants of the hut adding an emphatic "*khani*," a heartfelt "thank you;" then the master of the village begins to relate his own news in the same tone. It is impossible to 574 imagine anything more curious than this "mélopée" in two parts. 609 This law of hospitality is general all over the tribe. Should

831 —I mbolo ya shuburu.
881 —Penis est incircumcisi viri.

Banhwanyana ba ka Makwakwa ba kundja na ba hlanamile. N'yini?

Puellæ ex regione Makwakwa manibus apertis coeunt. Quid significant hæc verba?

—I mahlehlwa.

—Est semen mahlehwa.

(Hlehlwa is the seed of a creeper growing along the ground; this seed [517] is of the same size as a two shilling piece and possesses, in its central part, two hooks standing up.)

[Note 4 (page 88): these are the formulae:

Shana khololwane ma ri tiba le'ri onhaka milebe?

Do you know the bird that injures the labia minora?

—I mbolo ya shuburu.

It is the penis of an uncircumcised man.

Banhwanyana ba ka Makwakwa ba kundja na ba hlanamile. N'yini?

The girls from the region of Makwakwa have intercourse with open hands. What do these words mean?

—I mahlehlwa.

—Mahlehwa is the semen.

(Hlehlwa is the seed of a creeper growing along the ground; this seed [517] is of the same size as a two shilling piece and possesses, in its central part, two hooks standing up.)]

832 "Annotatio quinta (P. 98. 182). Externorum genitalium
836 minora labra verbo milebe (singul. nebe) designantur, quæ
304 puellæ adeo trahere solent ut ea usque ad quinque, decem,
881 etiam quindecim centimetra extendant. Quæ labra nonnunquam
171 parvis baculis metiuntur, eorum longitudine, apud comites suas, immo apud sponsos, gloriantes. Istis pravis moribus enim nihil aliud puellæ sequuntur nisi futuri mariti gratiam, cui apud Ba-Pedi, si sponsam suam labra non satis extendisse arbitratur, eam domum dimittere et boves suos reposcere licet. Puellæaululam pulmenti plenam parant quam operculo claudunt. Ad quas pueri vespere veniunt et stipem dant ut admittantur. In casae solo considunt et puellas cenantes spectant dum digitos in aululam demittunt. Puellæ quarum milebe quatuor digitos longa sunt, quatuor digitis usæ comedunt: bakulu, sunt, i.e. adultæ, et lætantur amatores. Aut tribus tantum, duobus aliquando utantur. Adolescentulæ cavis manibus cenant.

[Note 5 (pages 98 and 182). The labia minora of the outer genitals are called by the word milebe (singular nebe), and the girls are in the habit of pulling them so much that they extend from five or ten to as many as fifteen centimeters.

832 Sometimes the girls measure their labia with small sticks
836 and boast of their length to their companions and even to their
304 bridegrooms. The girls follow these perverse practices for
881 no other reason than for the sake of their future husband.
171 Among the Ba-Pedi the husband may, if he thinks that his bride has not sufficiently stretched her labia, send her home and demand his bulls back. The girls keep a pot full of food ready and cover it with a lid. In the evening the boys come to the girls and give them a small gift in order to be admitted. In the house they sit down on the floor and watch the girls eating from a pot with their fingers. The girls whose milebe are four digits long eat using four fingers: they are bakulu, that is, adult, and they enjoy their lovers. Or they use only three fingers and sometimes two. The young girls eat with the palms of their hands.]

765 "Annotatio sexta (P. 154). Seu quis per ætatem iam pro-
783 vectam imbecillior factus erit, sive qualibet de causa tam
833 impotens ut sperma emittere non possit (a nga kumi mati), ceteri viri quid fiat sciscitabuntur. Quod si utique parum procedit, tota inhibetur cærimonia. Qui vero se invicem eodem ritu miscere debebant, iis ritum conficere non fas est. Ille jejunio, per quinque dies, prout res postulat, artissime utetur, cui medicinæ ad rem accommodatæ exquirentur.

[Note 6 (page 154). If someone should have become feeble because of advanced age, or if for some reason he should be so impotent that he cannot emit sperms (a nga kumi mati), other men ask what should be done. For if it proceeds quite insufficiently, the whole ceremony is held up. And those who should have had intercourse in turn in the same ritual fashion are not permitted to complete the rite. He [the impotent man] has to fast very strictly for five days as the situation requires and the remedies appropriate to the situation will be sought.]

843 "Annotatio septima (P. 154). Nocens maritus uxorque sui
834 purgandi causâ alium ritum peragent. Uxor mariti suaque
841 pudenda veste intima et inquinatissima tergebit, quam postea comburet.

Ambo, ad ignem accedentes, caput manusque calefacient. Inde cinerem collectum mulier adipe miscet, quo mariti artus illinit, digitis bracchiis cruribusque tractis, quod 'lula' dicitur. Postea, noctibus duabus sequentibus, coibunt. Si maritus, non cum uxore sua, sed cum puella quadam ex alio vico, stupri consuetudinem junxerit, huic fossorium donabitur, ut ritum 'lula' perfectum veniat.

[Note 7 (page 154). If the husband and the wife are guilty of an offense, they perform another rite for the sake of purging themselves. The wife will cover her husband's and

302 The use of ochre is, however, not restricted to nursing mothers
538 or magicians : it is the special province of young marriageable
girls, wishing to attract attention : their brilliant skin shines like a
832 mirror, setting off to perfection the white of their eyes and the black of their hair, which is sometimes made flossy by means of antimony or ground charcoal. A quaint saying puts it thus ;

> Shindzingeri pundjene ? -Banhwanyana tolan !...
> What says the pretty bird with the coral neck that sings in the grass ?
> It says : Girls, anoint yourselves with ochre ! (if you wish to be as beautiful as it is).

177 Another ornament, of ancient date, is the *bracelet*. There
301 are several kinds : 1) the big heavy copper rings, called *masindana*, which greatly resemble those of the lake-dwellers, having a similar rather oval shape with an opening for slipping them over the wrist ; 2) the modern bracelets, called *busenga*, which the Rongas first bought in Natal, and which the Ma-Lemba introduced in the Northern clans ; they are made of iron wire twined round a ring of hide ; 3) the *mafowa* are more ancient, being made of seeds strung on thongs of skin, and are wound several times round the leg. This is an ornament for either dance or war.
301 The mafowa are sometimes made of the silvery cocoons of Argema Mimosae, the Queen Moth, which are found on nkanye trees, emptied of the chrysalis which is inside and filled with grains of millet which rattle when dancing !

301 *Beads* (nkarara) are evidently of later date ; they were introduced
439 by the Whites in the XVIth century, when the Portuguese were already in regular communication with Delagoa Bay and trafficked with the Natives, exchanging glassware for gold and ivory. Glass fascinated the Blacks : its brightness and transparency pleased
539 them immensely. An old song echoes their simple transports of delight :

> E ! Bashabi ! Batatana ba shabile ; ba buya ni shintshirimana sha balungoooo !..
> Hi ! Here come the buyers ! Our fathers return with their purchases ; they bring back with them the beautiful glittering things which the Whites sell !...

301 "A few years ago an ordinary glass bottle was thought a wonder by the people in the interior," said Timoteo Mandlati to me.

(He was a Nkuna from Shiluvane.) It is not strange therefore 301
that they became enamoured of beads. They give them special 832
names, according to colour and size, and succeed in turning them to very good account. The chief ornament the women make, (beadwork is exclusively done by the women), is the *mugangu* (No. 2), used in love-making (gangisa) ; it is a kind of crown of blue beads with red chevrons, worn by girls when they wish to beautify themselves. Some are wide and some narrow ; the beads are strung on threads which are crossed and knotted as the work proceeds : no canvas foundation is used. The bead necklace 301
is called *shihekisana*. Bead bracelets on the wrist are *shibolisa*, and on the ankles *maluwada*. Beads are also used in making large and heavy belts (mugadzi), weighing one to two pounds, and very much appreciated as an ornament when dancing. In the same way calabashes (No. 5) are covered with beads, bags made of hide (No. 4), bottles and even baskets. This bead work calls for a 276
good deal of patience. One of the things which the Ronga most 301
dearly loves to have decorated with beads is his tobacco pouch, (ngulana, No. 3), which is for him not only a means of satisfying his passion for taking snuff, but also one of his most prized ornaments. I do not now refer to the carved ebony tobacco box, worn *en bandoulière*, but to the article consisting of eight or nine large seeds, hollowed out, in which is kept the powder which stimulates the brain. Each of these seeds (which come from another country) is closed with a small piece of reed ; when one is walking they rattle against each other, producing a most delightful sound! The first thing a man will say to a friend on 576
meeting him, will be : "Fole?" — "Tobacco?" and before 276
anything further is said, each will indulge in a pinch. The same act of politeness is essential before beginning any discussion. The Thonga does not smoke the calumet of peace, but uses for a like purpose the many receptacled tobacco pouch, decorated with beads, which hangs from the belt at his hip. He takes from it a pinch of snuff, which he offers to his opponent ; the latter takes another pinch and proceedings then commence under the happiest auspices. Hearts are not far from concord... when noses have already fraternised!

533 Of course the colonists, who only knew "Kitchen Kafir,"
539 could not understand the complaint of the Nkuna boy!

The *song of the crab* is more tragic! (Tune No. 10). In a deep minor key a man cries for help! He went to hunt the big crabs which dwell in the mud of the mangrove forest, or on the sea-shore. He followed one ; the animal hastily hid itself in its hole. The imprudent hunter tried to catch it there ; he put his arm into the hole and attempted to pull the crab out. But the crustacean seized his finger in its claws so firmly that the man could not get free. He remained tightly held down, fixed to the ground. The tide is rising; soon it will cover him! And he cries :

> Yo-o ! Lomo tjukeni ku na mani ? — Hala yi khomi litiho !
> Alas ! - On the shore is there some one ? — The crab has caught me by the finger !

This is almost dramatic poetry and the scene is worthy of a true literary description.

533 The *erotic style* is cultivated by boys and girls on different
● 832 occasions though it must be said that love, as we understand it,
539 plays but little part in Thonga life. Boys in love generally express their feelings to the accompaniment of the unicord harp (see Chap. III) in the evening in the neighbourhood of the village of their beloved one ; I have never been able to catch the words of these songs, which are said to be sometimes very long, and are sung in a very loud voice ; they are not precisely chaste, according to one of our Native ministers, who considered that the use of the unicord harp ought to be forbidden to Christian boys! But here is a *love song* probably composed by a girl who was not allowed to marry the boy of her choice :

> To-morrow, to-morrow, my mother, I will start,
> To-morrow, father, I will start,
> I will start with an axe ;
> With this axe I will cut the stump,
> The stump on which my friend has hurt his leg,
> My friend whose belt of tails hangs from his waist,
> The one for whom I draw my legs out of the way. (1)

784 (1) Perhaps an allusion to the fact that it is taboo to pass over any one's outstretched
516 legs. She draws in her legs to give him the means of passing and coming to sit beside her.

The stump is perhaps some ill-disposed person whose opposition the energetic maid is determined to overcome! 533 832

As a counterpart, here is the *complaint of a jilted lover*, who gives vent to his annoyance with the girl and her family : 539

Refuse me if you will, girl!
The grains of maize you eat in your village are human eyes!
The tumblers from which you drink are human skulls!
The manioc roots you eat are human tibia!
The sweet potatoes are human fingers!
Refuse me, if you will, girl!

The vexation of a jilted lover is of short duration. He has the money, he is sure to find a girl! But it would be erroneous to think Native lovers or husbands are not capable of deep and lasting affection. I know of a case, near Shiluvane, in which a Nkuna committed suicide because his wife had deceived him, and had relations with another man. 831

See, I. p. 286, the song in which the *despised wife* gives vent to her anger : her husband has plucked her little pumpkin and given it to the wife he preferred. No doubt the *bukwele*, the special feeling of jealousy existing between co-wives, has inspired more than one song which could find no equivalent in our own literature! 533

Mourning songs are numerous ; they are sung just after the burial. They are touching ; note the simple cry : 533 765 539

Mamane! You have left us! whither have you gone?

The tune (No. 14) is striking : a very high and prolonged note, followed by double crochets sounded very rapidly and ending in another long note with a short sharp conclusion, like a cry of anguish.

One of those present rises and sings, as if he were playing the part of the bereaved :

A ba ndji ya'ange-ke lepai?
Have they not hated me, treating me in this way?

All the throng of the mourners answer :

Ba ku yalile, wena, wa ka manyana!
They have hated you, son of so and so!